

PROPAGANDA

No. 3, SUMMER 1984

\$1.25



SPECIMEN · LIQUID SKY · FASHION

PROPAGANDA No. 3, Summer 1984

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Contents: Liquid Sky, Specimen, Sisters of Mercy,
Collapsing New Buildings, Fishnet Fashion,
Berlin Punks, and Art to Wear

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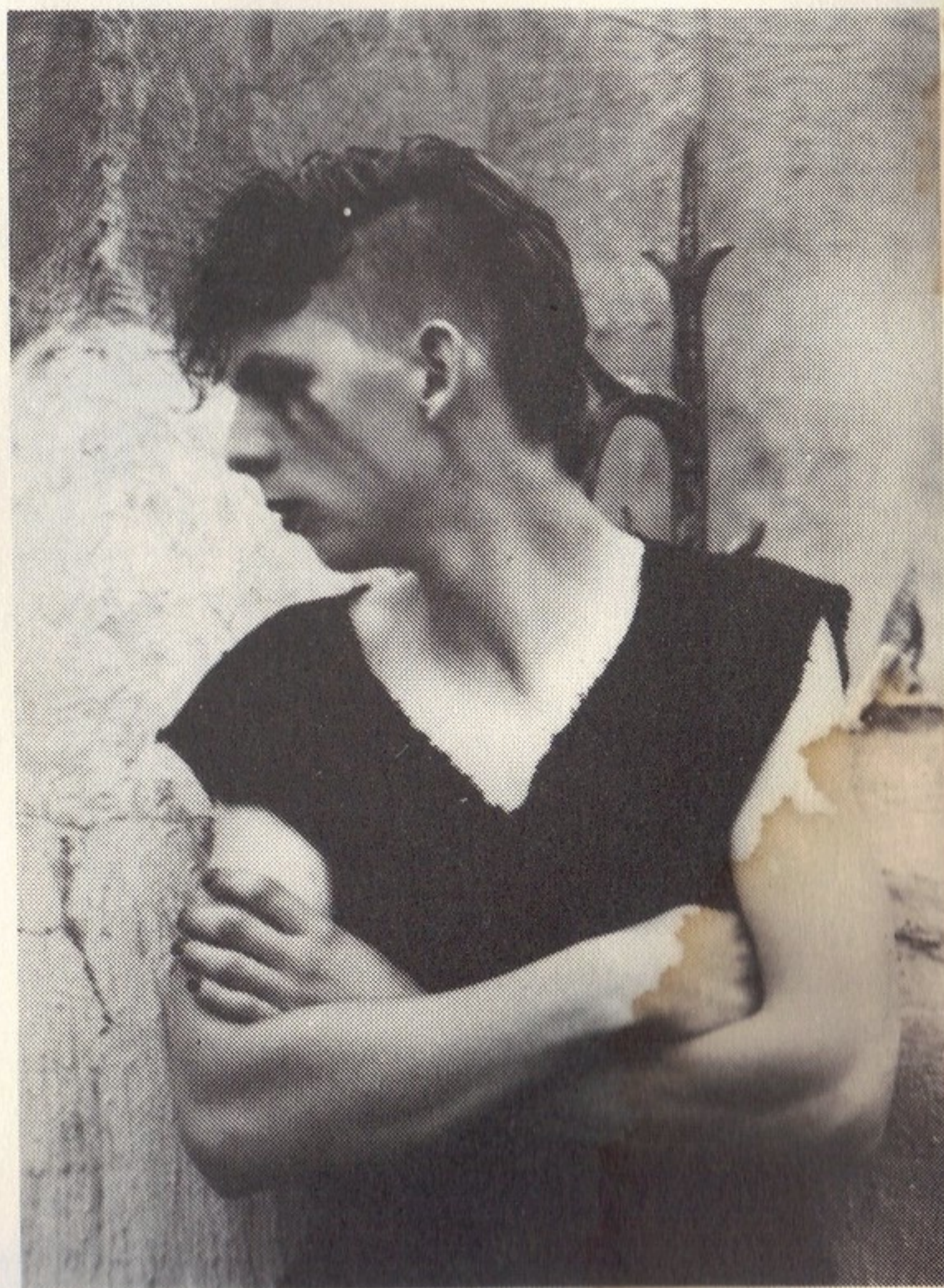
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New Hyde Park, NY 11040

*Soft burlap shirt in
black from BOY of
London - \$35 at Trash
and Vaudeville, 4 St.
Marks Pl., NYC 10003
(212) 982-3590.*

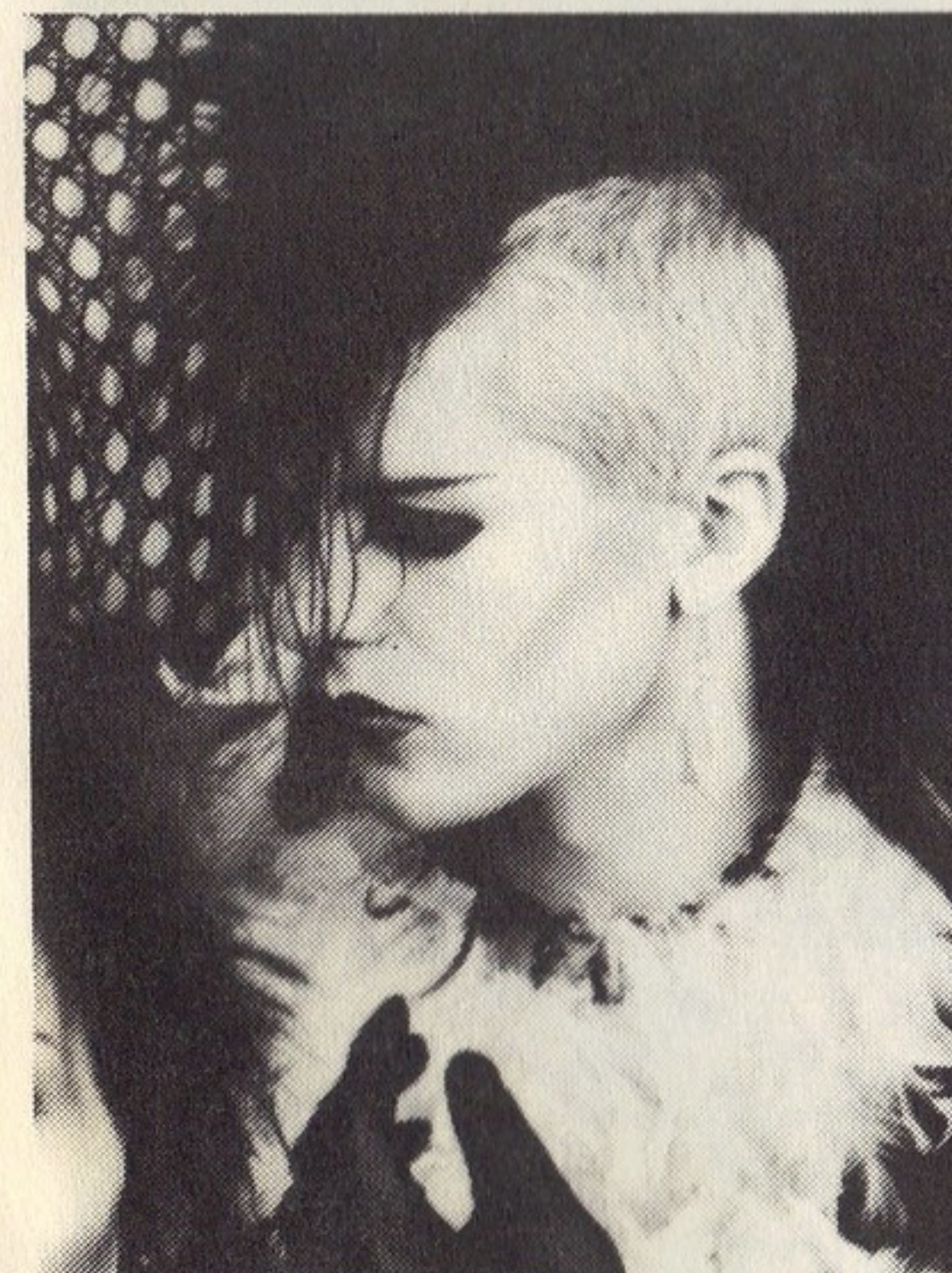
Photo by Fred Berger

*Hair by Mods and
Rockers, Hicksville
NY (516)935-9819.*

Model: Wayne Arents



Gothic Faces



*Top left: At Danceteria's Einsturzende Neubauten show
on Feb. 24, 1984. Photo by Fred Berger.*

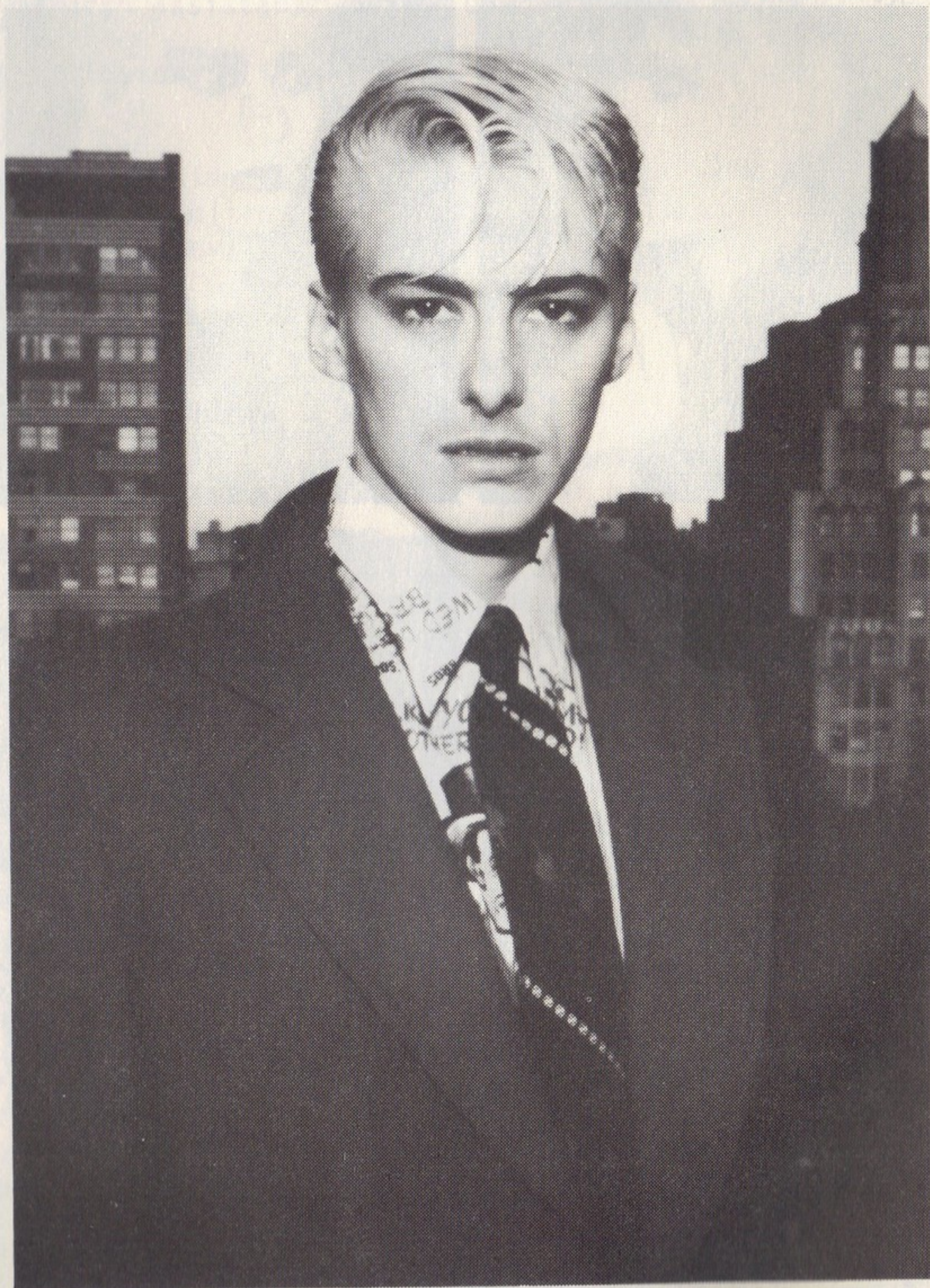
*Top right: At Danceteria's Alien Sex Fiend show - Mar.
24, 1984. Photo by Wayne Arents.*

*Bottom left: Jonny Melton of The Specimen. Photo by
Deborah Feingold.*

Bottom right: Deep in the crypt. Photo by Fred Berger.

LIQUID SKY

Text by Fred Berger
Photos: Copyright 1982 by Z-Films



Jimmy on a Manhattan roof top. Photo by Yuri Neyman.



An obnoxious fashion reporter pesters Margaret.



Jimmy lashes Margaret with a sharp tongue.



Adrian has a thing for long, shapely legs.

Liquid Sky is a very decadent Punk Rock/Drug Culture art film made in 1982 by Russian dissidents who immigrated to the U.S. a few years before. From the look of things I'd say the film is a result of pent-up creativity gone berzerk. It could also be that its creators were quite warped to start with, and Soviet authorities were only too eager to get rid of them.

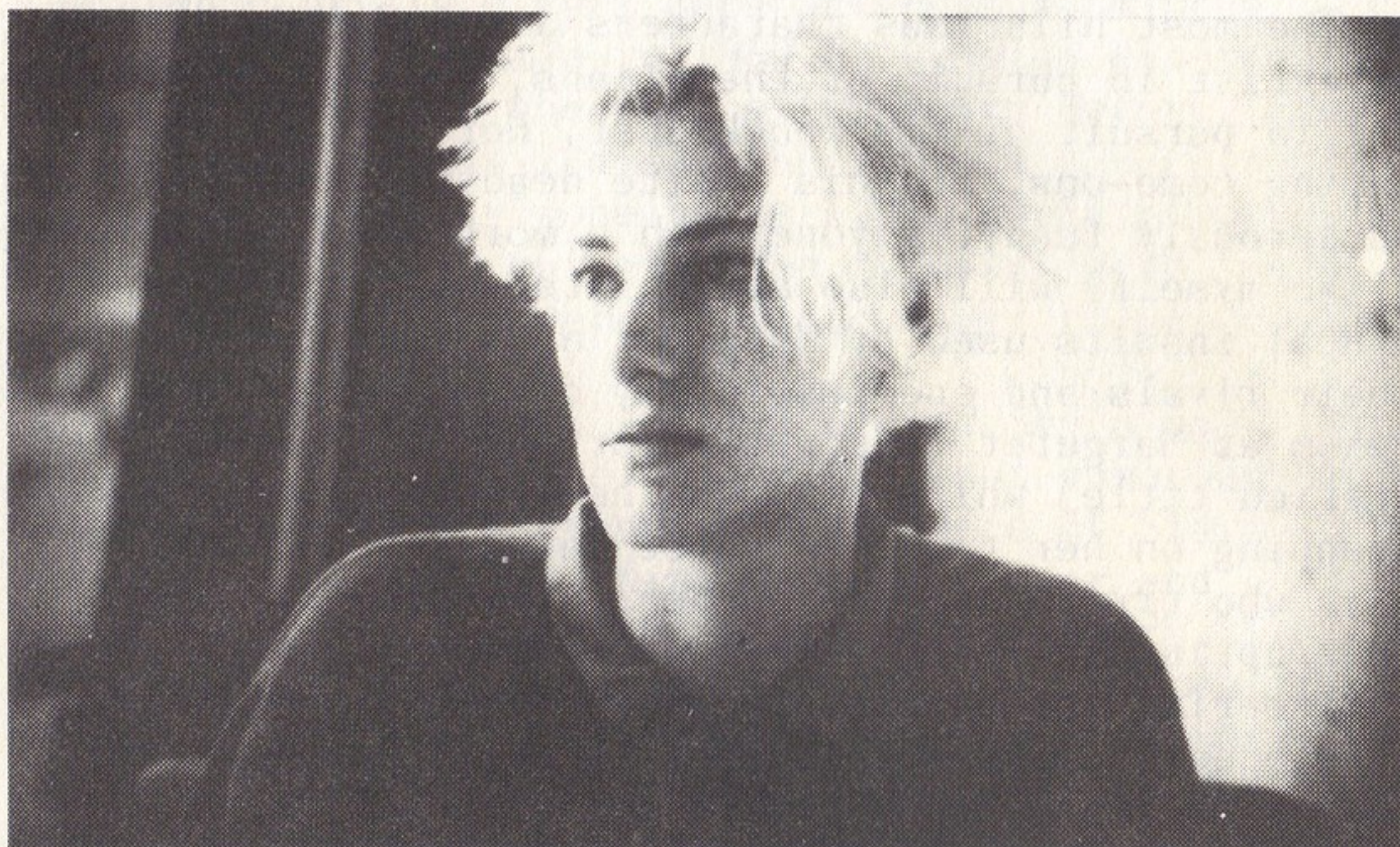
Whatever the case, I found *Liquid Sky* a most perversely imaginative, beautiful, and humorous bit of work thanks to the creative excellence of Slava Tsukerman (director), Nina Kerova (writer and producer), and Yuri Neyman (cinematographer). I realize that my enthusiasm for the film (I saw it four times) isn't shared by most mainstream movie critics. However, most agree that the cinematography and Anne Carlisle's performance in the two leading roles are all brilliant. Yuri Neyman's eye captures the hypnotic, dark, and seductive beauty of Manhattan at night in all its decadent glory. His use of lighting, camera shots, and pacing is delirious and exhilarating. Of all Manhattan's night creatures, Anne Carlisle is both king and queen. She plays the freaky female model - Margaret, and the junky male model - Jimmy. When I first saw the film I was convinced that Margaret and Jimmy were played by two different people - one female and the other - male. Both characters are bi-sexual, androgenous, cruel, self-centered, and doomed. Ms. Carlisle's personal experience on New York's underground fashion scene gives them a high degree of authenticity and intensity - they are amazing.

Liquid Sky can be classified as a B-grade sci-fi black comedy. It features a frizz-bee sized spacecraft in search of heroin and sex. The aliens find plenty of both in the degenerate punk circles inhabited by Margaret and Jimmy, and prey on their victims with crystal spikes shot through their skulls during orgasm. Ordinarily I'm pretty turned-off by anything having to do with drug abuse (it's so played-out and tacky), but here it seems to get lost in the overall insanity. The film is bleak in its cynicism and dark in its sense of impending doom; what's funny is the effect this all has on its characters.

The most hilarious characters are a German scientist in pursuit of the aliens, and a horny Jewish gal in pursuit of his knockwurst. Her sarcasm and daring come-ons, and his polite dead pan responses are murderously funny. Anyone with a morbid sense of humor (like myself) will also appreciate the incredibly brutal insults used by Margaret and Jimmy against their rivals and enemies. Jimmy directs his verbal venom at Margaret (his rival for the underground Miss America title) while slapping her in the face and stepping on her toes. Margaret saves her's for creepy guys who try to score with her; of course it always ends up in a vicious rape scene. Naturally her domineering lesbian lover disapproves of these nasty little heterosexual episodes. She also has a sharp tongue and shows no mercy in using it on her manhandled mate. It's too bad the film makers picked such a petite, squirrely-looking girl to play Adrian. They should have used a more sinister type like Siouxsie of *Siouxsie And The Banshees* or Annie Lennox of *The Eurythmics*.

Many conventional critics have knocked *Liquid Sky* for being shallow and ridiculous, but they don't understand that it was meant to be that way. If it were complex and plausible it would have considerably diminished impact. Its black humor and manic intensity depend on the absurdity and simplicity of its plot, characters, and situations. And besides, the visual quality and fashion sense of the film are so dazzling that everything else just about shrinks to insignificance. Intellect and good taste have no place here and get a thorough thrashing.

For a few hip people this kind of science fiction is lots of fun, but for the vast majority *Star Wars* is more like it. No wonder *Liquid Sky* has played at only one theater in the New York metropolitan area for the past nine months. Since June 1983 Lower Manhattan's Waverly Theater has showed the film to capacity crowds all day every day. It has also played in Toronto, Canada; London, England; and Sydney, Australia where it was voted Best Film at the 1983 Sydney Film Festival. Apparently *Liquid Sky* has become an international cult classic.



Margaret remembering Mom's apple pie at a downtown cafe. She's just an uptight WASP slut from Connecticut seeking fame and fortune in the Big Apple.



A fashion columnist accuses Margaret of tackiness. Her defense - "I wear what they want me to wear - same as you baby."



Jimmy calls his female look-alike everything in the book - bag lady, chicken woman, whore. At the same time he stomps her toes and slaps her across the face.



Jimmy is baffled by his victim's passivity. Margaret turns the tables when she dares him to screw her. He gets Frenched and then the aliens kill him.

SPECIMEN

Text and Photos by Fred Berger
Two photos courtesy of Sire Records



Sire Records

Jonny (Slut) Melton - the evil face of The Specimen.





Ollie in vinyl raincoat. He likes vinyl - it's tacky.

With Punk growing old and Hardcore still going nowhere, youth on the cutting edge of fright fashion has a new evil style to cling to - Batcave. It gets its name from the notorious London club that gave it birth. It is a Gothic horror, trans-sexual look wrapped in torn black fishnets and lace, and smeared with zombie make-up. For the fearsome five of *The Specimen* it's not just an act; Batcave is a way of life. The style comes spontaneously and they're very comfortable in it.

The most outrageous is Jonny (Slut) Melton (synthesizer) with a long black Mohawk hanging in his painted face, and thick black lizards tail slung over his shoulder - looking like he crawled out of a swamp. It's easy to see why he was picked for the band - he's a perfect Specimen. It doesn't matter that he can't play keyboards; he's the band's 19 year-old sex symbol - pretty and just for show. In concert he only spends about half his time at the synthesizer; the rest of the time he's skulking and lounging about the stage as if he couldn't care less. Even when he's playing it's in an off-handed, even resentful, kind of way. It is this irreverent attitude combined with all the gastly make-up and black lingerie that gives him the look of some crazed whore from Hell.

After seeing Jonny at the Ritz on Jan. 7 '84, me and a couple of friends decided he was good enough to be one of Dracula's brides. One of my perverted partners described him as, "the girl of my dreams, but not the kind I'd take home to mother". What a shock he had when I popped his bubble with the cruel truth. We got a good laugh out of it, but there are those who take offense and react violently to the confusion. Ever since Oct. 1982, when Jonny moved to London and shed his suburban school boy exterior, he's taken a lot of abuse from boneheads bent on proving their manhood. One incident occurred in a restaurant mens room when the Slut intruded on a pissing jock. He was ordered to get out and directed to the ladies room. When the poor lad insisted he was a bloke, his honesty was rewarded with a manly bash on the beak. So what, Jonny's making far more money than the pea-sized brain can add up, and he gets a lot more sex too - why do you think he's called Slut.

(Continued on next page)

John Klein (guitarist) looks like a refugee from the grave - hollow-eyed with sunken cheeks and sharp boney features, haggard and emaciated. His hair is long and electrified, and like fellow Specimen Jonny Melton he's partial to transsexual fashion. As a result he also has been the victim of harassment in the name of decency. Once when John and Jonny were making their way through a busy London street market an eerie silence fell upon the crowd. For a moment everyone stared in disbelief, but when they regained their senses they let fly a barrage of insults, fruits and vegetables. The sorry pair kept walking and by the time they were out of range looked like they'd crawled out of a tossed salad. But John doesn't let it get him down; he's an excellent guitarist and a major force behind *Specimen's* Heavy Metal/New Wave sound.

Kevin Mills (bass) has been with the band since its origin in the Spring of 1981. He's not as creepy as Melton and Klein, but he looks evil enough with his crew cut, ghostly white face, ragged black cloths and flat black bass. Unfortunately *Specimen* has always had problems with its drummers - they never seemed to fit. The first drummer was expelled because his girlfriend wouldn't let him wear make-up. The second (Jonathan Trevisick) got the boot moments before the band took off for their first U.S. tour in early Dec. 1983. This one treated the band like a 9 to 5 job - definitely the wrong attitude. The new drummer is former Thompson Twin Chris Bell. When I saw him at the Ritz he still looked like a Thompson Twin, but with a little time he may yet fall under the evil influence of *The Specimen*.

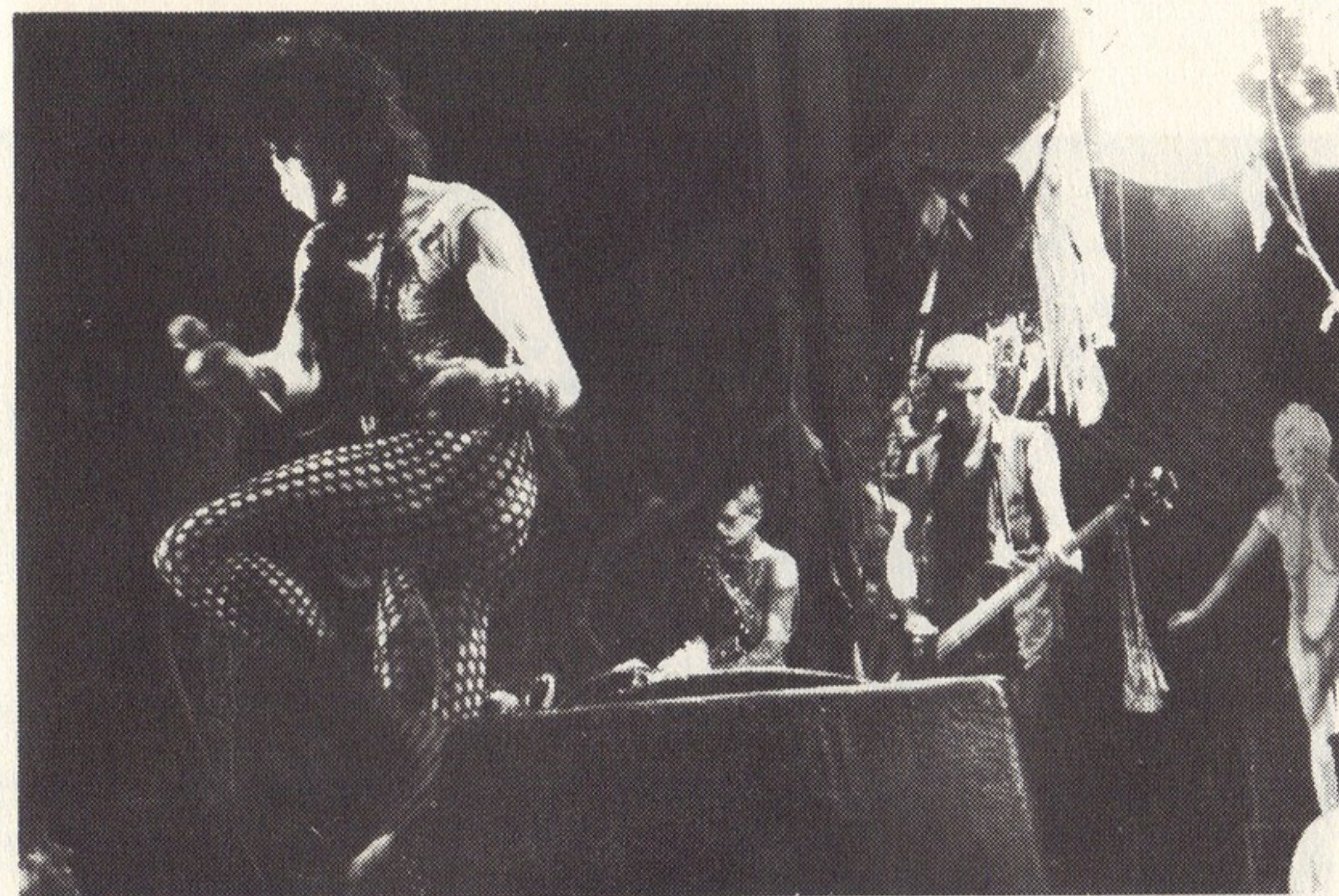
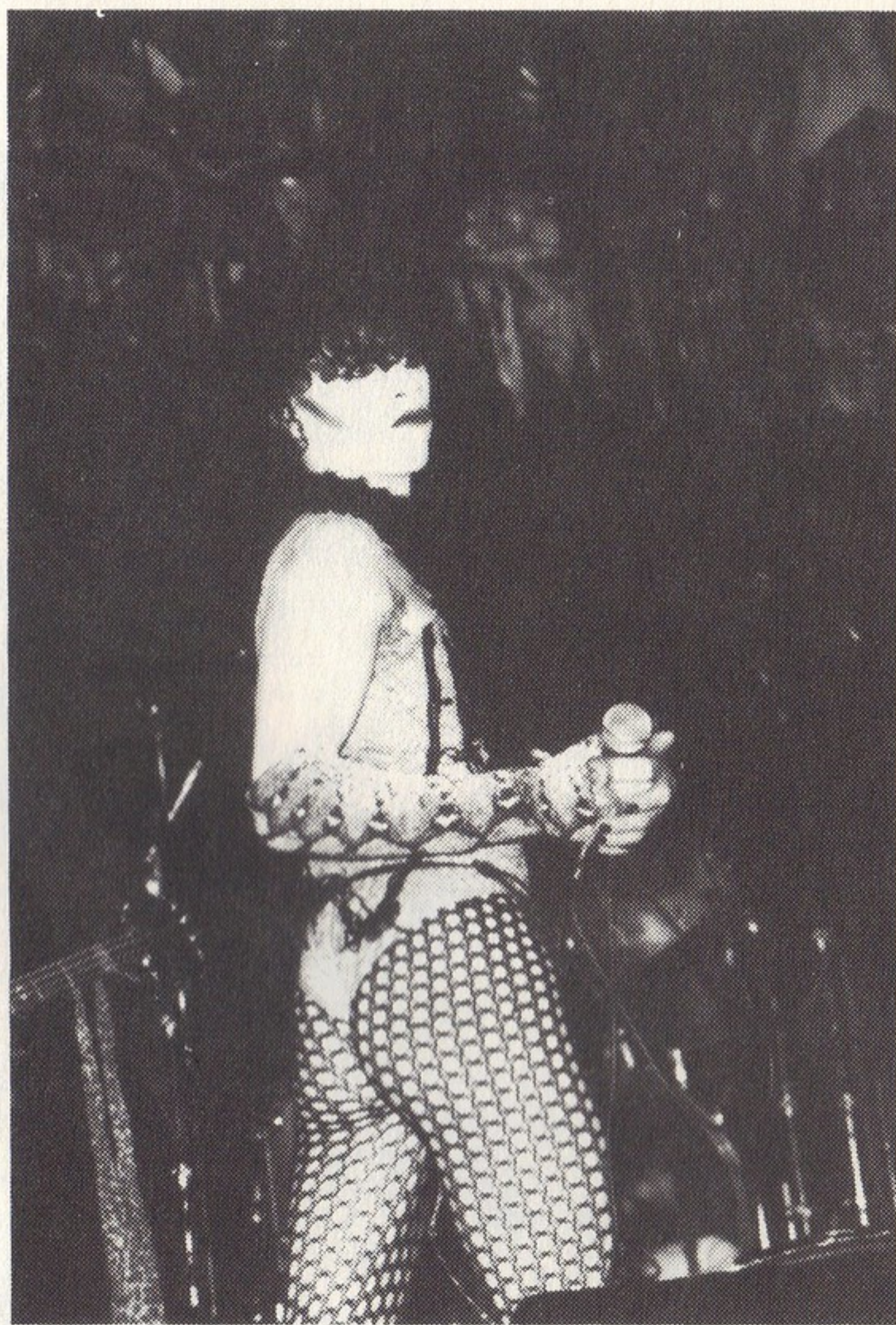
Ollie Wisdom (lead vocals) looks like an abused version of Dr. Frank N. Furter from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. He's slinky, slimy, and sly like a snake; the fires of Hell burn in his eyes. His vocals are the siren song of blasphemy, lechery, and blood; they darken your mind and pull you in. In the Spring of '81 at age 22 he formed *The Specimen* out of total boredom with all the adorable synthesized bands on the New Wave scene. Instead he created a gruesome, heavy-hitting band with a new style in sound and fashion. *Specimen's* music is basically Pop, but gets a lot from Heavy Metal and nothing from Funk.



Jonny and Kev make an Ollie Wisdom sandwich.
Photo courtesy of Sire Records.

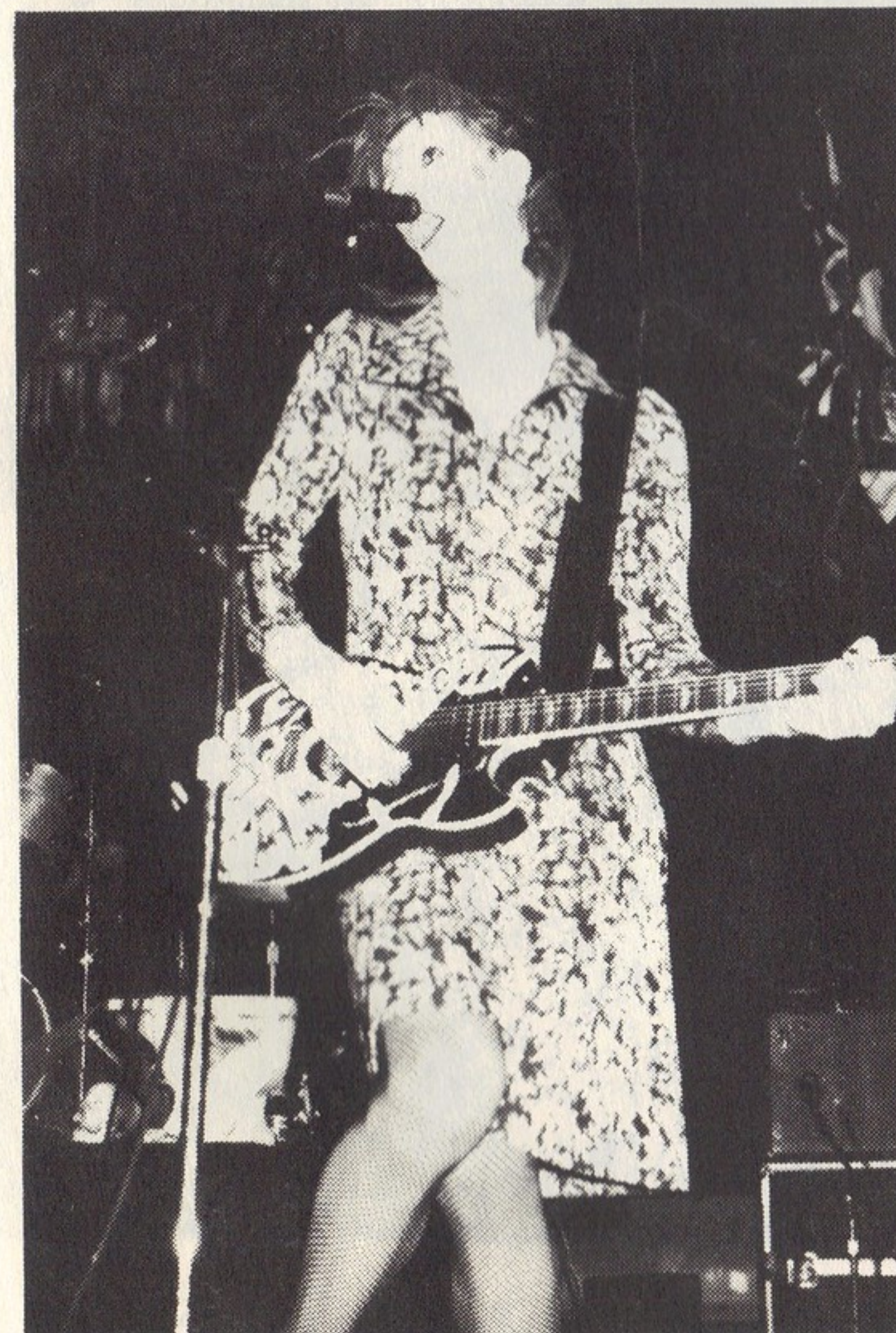
Top: Ollie Wisdom - master of poor taste.

Bottom: Jonny Melton skulking about on stage at the Ritz. He was far more lively on cable T.V.'s Rock of the 80s and in the hour-long Specimen video. Apparently the band resented the indifference of the N.Y. crowd. At the Danceteria show they splattered the audience with pizza.



Top: Ollie moves like a hot Las Vegas showgirl - Susanne Summers step aside.

Bottom: John Klein looks fine in almost anything - from Boy Scout uniform to Grandma's dress. He's the joker of the group. On the Specimen video he did most of the talking while Ollie molested the Slut.





The Slut and Kevin Mills at the Ritz - Jan. 7, 1984.

Sick and tired of the abuse meted out to them by "normal" audiences at "normal" clubs Ollie created London's infamous Batcave. Its ethic is Blasphemy, Lechery, and Blood; its motto - Sin is Salvation. The club - strewn with fishnets, seaweed, and cobwebs - resembles a dried-up swamp. It's become an institution of the macabre and has featured such bands as *Alien Sex Fiend*, *Bauhaus*, and *Sisters of Mercy*. These and other sinister groups together with the gloomy atmosphere of the Batcave have drawn to it the most frightening element of the British Post-Punk scene. Jonny Melton submitted to the pull in Oct. 1982. Impressed by his looks, Ollie immediately picked him out of the crowd and enlisted him into *The Specimen*. The Batcave is open every Wednesday night and also features 1930s monster movies, DJs with the Batcave frame of mind, and bizarre cabaret.

In 1983 *Specimen* released two great singles. First came the bat-shaped single - the vinyl is cut in the shape of a bat. It features "Kiss Kiss Bang Bang" and "Returning from a Journey". Both songs are totally original and have a tremendously memorable impact, especially "Kiss Kiss". This one is the most wicked and exhilarating of all the *Specimen* tunes. Ollie crys "Kiss Kiss Bang Bang" with such venom that it chills you to the bone. "Returning From A Journey" flies high with fluttering bat wings through a pre-dawn sky. It's spooky and lots of fun. The next release was *The Beauty of Poison* which also features "Tell Tale". This single is more Pop, more refined, and more elaborate than the one before. For these reasons I find it less memorable and less exciting, but still great listening and a must-have. *Specimen* also has a cut on the *Young Limbs* Batcave compilation album (1983). "Dead Mans Autochop" is especially poisonous; you'll definitely go to Hell for listening to this one.

Specimen has pushed the Batcave sound and fashion far beyond its accursed cradle - casting its spell all over the U.K. There are now Batcave nights at such clubs as Planets in Liverpool, the Hacienda in Manchester, and the Belfry in Leicester. For the holiday season (Dec. '83/Jan. '84) *Specimen* sunk its fangs into a virgin America. Their U.S. tour was billed as "the tasteless event of '83".

The trail of blood began at New York's Danceteria, and from there spilled across the nation to a dozen other cities. Returning from their journey *Specimen* took another bite out of the Big Apple with a show at the Ritz on Jan. 7, 1984 - this is the one I saw. The stage was done-up like the Batcave with huge cobwebs and seaweed clotted fishnets dangling, and there were a lot of people with a Batcave look about them. There were no unpleasant incidents as is often the case in Britain when the band plays on other people's turf. *Specimen* loves the States and considers it a better place to play because American audiences are more tolerant of innovation and diversity. Jonny Melton even admits that he's got more hots for Americans than his fellow Britons. The Ritz show got a lot of publicity and was broadcast on LIR. There were several tables upstairs reserved for Warner Bros. Records - *Specimen's* state-side distributor. The whole rigamarole was to promote their just-released mini-LP, *Batastrophe*. This record features the four songs from their first two singles plus two relatively boring new songs - "Syria" and "Lovers".

To capitalize on New York's Specimania Danceteria scheduled a Batcave Night for Friday the 13th. Their ad gave the impression that either *Specimen* or some other decadent Batcave act would be the highlight of the evening. A lot of people showed up with high expectations and wild Batcave attire, but were horrified to find no entertainment, a half-ass impersonation of the London Batcave, and music from the top 40. It was everything Friday the 13th is supposed to be - a disaster.

Specimen ended their U.S. tour with a non-performing appearance at Irving Plaza (N.Y.C.) on Wednesday Jan. 25. It was just an evening to mingle and view a new video by the band. Speaking of video, I saw *Specimen* Mar. 16 on cable TV's *Rock of the 80s*. Before an L.A. crowd they did "The Beauty of Poison" and "Returning from a Journey". Ollie wore a red vinyl mini-skirt with a combination top and zippers galore. The Slut was especially hyper - sticking his tongue at the camera, nibbling on Ollie's ear, and otherwise playing with himself. Who'd have thought such a bunch of depraved ghouls would ever play on an American Pop show. After *Specimen* Pop will never be the same again.

Caught in the Net

Photos by Fred Berger



The one that didn't get away.



*Fishnet shirt - \$25
from Enz's, 5 St.
Marks Pl., NYC 10003
(212) 420-1875.*

*20x20 ft. net - \$20
from Woodhaven
Surplus, 80-85
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Woodhaven, NY 11421
(212) 296-4982.*

*Hair by Mods and
Rockers, Hicksville,
NY (516)935-9819.*

*Model: Wayne Arents.
For hire, works
cheap. Contact
editor.*





Perilous rendezvous. Fishnet gloves - \$12 from Trash and Vaudeville, 4 St. Marks Pl., NYC 10003 (212) 982-3590. Model: Debbie Osgood.



Hit and run. Fishnet stockings - \$5 from Manic Panic, 33 St. Marks Pl., NYC 10003 (212) 254-5517. Model: Debbie Osgood. For hire, works cheap. Contact editor.

Sisters of Mercy

Text by Chris Zelevski/Photo by Edi Snipe



Sisters of Mercy - Danceteria, Fri. April 13, 1984.

Praise be to the Angel of Death - talk of the band's demise were all lies; *Sisters of Mercy* still live to stalk the earth. It would be dismal indeed to have lost such a great Gothic Horror group so soon after the passage of *Bauhaus*. To know what they're about the 1983 single - *Heartland/Temple of Love* is the best place to start. "Heartland" sounds something like an old Clint Eastwood western - especially the slick, haunted guitar. It gives the feeling of swift and violent death on an endless wind-swept plain. The vocals are equally haunted and cry out for the heartland; it makes me homesick for a desolate, faraway, and dangerous place I've never known.

"Temple of Love" is as spooky and mysterious as "Heartland". It beats like the wings of Death on a black and stormy night. The voice beckons you to the shelter of the Temple of Love. It is the siren song of the Prince of Darkness himself. For those black-hearted among you, I also highly recommend the *Sisters'* single *Anaconda/Phantom* with its typically haunted sensuality. Both singles are available at 99 Records, 99 McDougal St. in Greenwich Village.

Einstürzende Neubauten

Text and Photos by Fred Berger



A horrendous noise, a shower of metal splinters and sparks, and choking gasoline fumes.

The Danceteria ad read: *Fri. Feb. 24 from Germany!*
First American Appearance!
Some Bizarre Recording Artists!
EINSTURZENDE NEUBAUTEN
(Collapsing New Buildings)

When they said "Bizarre" they weren't kidding. When they said "Recording Artists" I'm not so sure. True, they've got an album, but it sounds more like a building demolition than music. No wonder they call themselves *Collapsing New Buildings*. Their instruments consist of a cement mixer, a buzz saw, a jackhammer, steel pipes, and sheet metal. The vocals are just distorted ranting and raving, screaming and moaning - like someone driven mad by the infernal noise of construction destruction. I think the five guys in this "band" are really hard hats who've done too much overtime. They actually started to enjoy the sound of their work and decided to pass it off as art. Alright I have to admit that I kind of liked it for the first ten minutes - it had a good beat and a hypnotic effect. But after a while it became an endurance test - *Einsturzende Neubauten* was on for about 40 minutes.

Just off the edge of the stage they had erected a steel rod platform suspended by two large trash canisters, over which they layed a long piece of sheet metal. While one guy beat it with metal pipes, another went to work on it with a buzz saw, spraying the audience with a fountain of sparks and metal fragments. This pushed the crowd back about 20 feet from the stage while a few people (myself included) found shelter under the sheet metal and steel rods. Danceteria should have issued protective goggles for the \$10 admission fee.

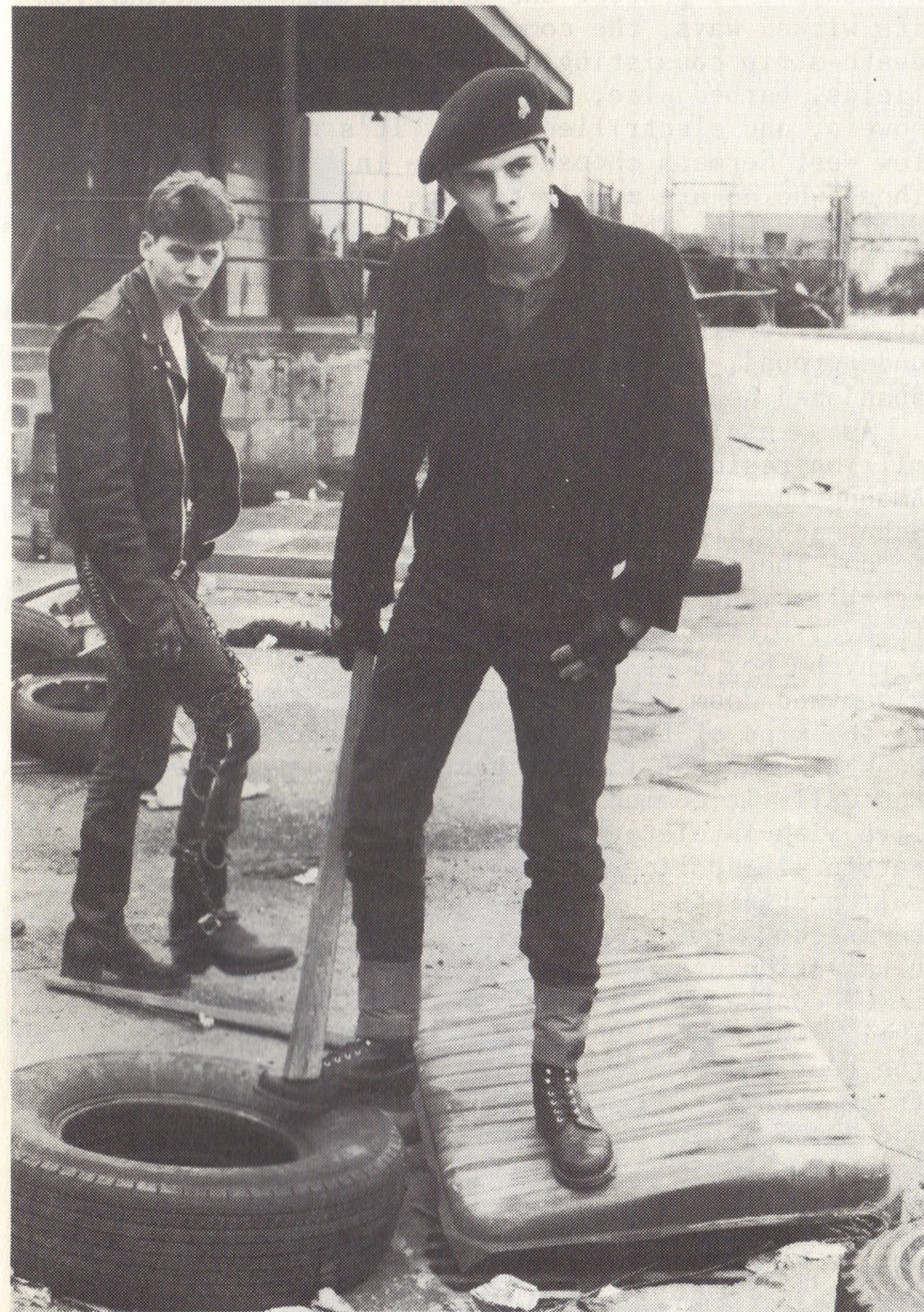
There were also choking fumes from the gasoline motor-driven equipment, and dust from the jackhammer's obliteration of a pile of cinder blocks. For a finale the goon with the jackhammer used it to punch the sheet metal and steel rods into the audience. I was chopped in the neck by the falling debris; good thing my jacket collar was up or I'd have been cut. Apparently no one was seriously hurt in the "collapse", but a lot of people were mad and heckled the group; a couple even threw beer bottles. The bloodthirsty fiends on stage responded by hurling chunks of cinder blocks at the angry mob. I got scared and split.

Danceteria was full of very sinister looking people; many were Germans. There were six people taking photos and two with movie cameras. Einsturzende Neubauten is something to see, so who cares if they can't play music. For those who care the name of their album is 80-83 Strategies Against Architecture. The title tells you just how it sounds.



Die Schweinehunde

Text and Photos by Tina Richter



Left to Right: Dieter Eichmann and Willi Schuhmacher.

West Berlin (90 miles deep into Soviet-occupied East Germany) is a noisy, brightly lit, and very exciting little island in a dark and silent sea of communism. To protect the surrounding population from its wicked ways, the communists encircled it with a death-strip consisting of a high concrete wall, mine fields, barbed wire, search lights, machine gun towers, and electrified fence. It's no wonder that few West Germans choose to live in the walled city. Those who do are mostly teenage runaways, punks and draft evaders. They are unable to adjust to the West German obsession with cleanliness, order, and prosperity - so they seek refuge in the isolated limbo of West Berlin. Here there is an established youth underground, wild night life, rows and rows of abandoned housing, and no draft.

As a result well over half of West Berlin's two million residents are teenagers or young adults. Among them are Dieter Eichmann (19) and Willi Schuhmacher (also 19) of *Die Schweinehunde* (The Filthy Dogs). They chose this name because it is how the establishment refers to young people on the social fringe. Dieter sings, Willi plays the synthesizer, and a rhythm box does the rest. Their music is minimalist gloom and doom with a driving, oppressive sound. This is the kind of thing that is very popular with the punk tribes that inhabit the bombed-out areas along the wall. It communicates the despair of having to live with intolerance, unemployment, and an on-going battle with police. This battle takes the form of police attempts to evict young squatters from one burnt-out shell after another, and their violent retaliation against West Berlin's most prime sections.

Of course Dieter and Willi are in the thick of it. Their song "Nacht und Nebel" (Night and Fog) expresses the fear of arrest in the dead of night. "Feuer Sturm" (Fire Storm) expresses the wild rage that has turned the elegant Kurfurstendamm shopping strip into a war zone. Both of these menacing songs are on a single that has been sold in West Berlin, Hamburg, and Amsterdam. *Die Schweinehunde* has played in all of these cities, but their regular gig is a notorious West Berlin club called Der Bunker (The Bunker). It is a World War Two bomb shelter that looks as evil as the people who go there.



Die Schweinehunde often plays in pitch blackness - broken from time to time by police strobs and spotlights. In a flash the darkness can be ripped away by high-intensity floodlights from backstage - blinding the audience and turning the band into ghostly silhouettes. Dieter's vocals can sound like the cry of a wild animal, or like a riot trooper barking on his amplifier. The beat pounds like a heart racing with fear, anger, and excitement. The effect is very physical.



Art to Wear

Photos by Fred Berger



Rubber outfit with accessories by Barbara Klar.
(212) 598-1102

ArtExpo '84, an annual display of wearable art, was featured at the New York Coliseum from April 5 to 9. It consisted of designs by 40 artists working in fabric, leather, suede, and rubber. Of course PROPAGANDA prefers leather and rubber, hence the choice of photos. Information about the outfits worn in the photos can be had by calling the phone numbers listed in the captions.



Hand woven leather dress and kimono by Elias Ben Ave.
(212) 505-1472

BACK ISSUE: PROPAGANDA Issue No. 2, Winter 1983/84
Description: 5½x8½ inch format, 36 pages, 45 photos,
4 illustrations, and 8 full pages of text.

PROPAGANDA

No. 2, WINTER 1983/84

\$1.50



◆ ROAD WARRIOR

◆ FEAR



Contents:

- 1) THE ROAD WARRIOR - 17 photos from the film and 4 pages of text on everything a Mad Max freak needs to know.
- 2) FEAR - 9 photos and 3 pages of text on the band's history from 1978 to 1983.
- 3) HARDCORE AND HORSEPOWER - an artical about some real-life Road Warriors - 4 pages and 6 photos.
- 4) SLAMDANCE FEVER - a photo-essay about slamdancing - 5 pages, 8 photos.
- 5) SUBHUMANS - a review of their 3 singles from 1981 to '83, with 3 illustrations from the dust jackets.

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